

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 117124

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT ATHENS 4606 ACTION SECSTATE INFO ANKARA
NICOSIA DATED MAY 17:

QTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 4606

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT REPEAT OTHER ADDRESSEES AS DESIRED

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GR, US

SUBJECT: LAST WEEK'S MEETINGS IN LONDON: COMMENTS BY BITSIOS

1. ON HIS RETURN LAST THURSDAY EVENING FROM LONDON, I
SPOKE BY TELEPHONE ABOUT SEVERAL THINGS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER
BITSIOS AND HE AGREED TO MEET ME ON THE NEXT DAY TO DISCUSS THE
JUST-COMPLETED LONDON MEETINGS. HOWEVER, HE BECAME ILL DURING THE
NIGHT WITH A PAINFULLY INFECTED TOOTH AND SWOLLEN FACE, AND
I WAS ABLE TO GET TOGETHER WITH HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME ONLY
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 STATE 117124

LAST NIGHT, MAY 16.

2. OVERALL, HE SAID THAT HE AND PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS
FELT THE SUMMIT HAD BEEN VERY WORTHWHILE AND A SUBSTANTIAL
SUCCESS. A RENEWED SPIRIT OF STRENGTH AND CONFIDENCE HAD PERVADED
THE CONFERENCE AND THIS RADIATED TO PROVIDE A NEW WAVE OF HOPE
AND OPTIMISM TO THE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. PRESIDENT CARTER HAD

MADE A SPLENDID IMPRESSION ON EVERYONE AND HAD PROJECTED, BENEATH HIS WARM AND FRIENDLY EXTERIOR, A SENSE OF DEEP INNER STRENGTH, ABILITY AND TOUGHNESS.

3. BITSIOS SAID THAT THEIR SHORT, PRIVATE SESSION WITH THE PRESIDENT WAS THE HIGHPOINT OF ALL THEIR MEETINGS. UNFORTUNATELY, IT WAS TOO SHORT TO ACCOMPLISH VERY MUCH BUT THE TWO LEADERS HAD GOTTEN TO KNOW EACH OTHER AND OBVIOUSLY DEVELOPED AN IMMEDIATE FEELING OF PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP AND RAPPORT. HE ASKED ME IF I HAD RECEIVED A REPORT OF THE MEETING I SAID NO, AND HE PROCEEDED TO BRIEF ME FROM THEIR RECORDS (WHICH I SHALL NOT REPEAT HERE SINCE THIS INFORMATION IS ALREADY AVAILABLE IN WASHINGTON).

4. THE ONLY OFF KEY NOTE IN CARAMANLIS' MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT, FROM THE GREEK POINT OF VIEW, CAME WHEN SOMEONE "LECTURED" (AS HE PUT IT) CARAMANLIS ABOUT HOW MUCH MONEY THE U.S. HAD INVESTED IN NATO AND HOW IMPORTANT IT WAS FOR GREECE AND TURKEY TO MAKE "MUTUAL", SUBSTANTIVE CONCESSIONS ON BILATERAL PROBLEMS TO RESTORE THE INTEGRITY AND STRENGTH OF NATO'S SOUTHERN FLANK. HE SAID THAT HE AND CARAMANLIS THOUGHT THIS WAS UNNECESSARY AND IN ANY CASE WAS NOT THE BEST RATIONALE FOR APPROACHING GREEK-TURKISH DIFFERENCES AT THE MOMENT. I SOUGHT TO INTERPRET AND DEVELOP THE USG'S LINE OF THINKING ON THIS A LITTLE MORE BUT BITSIOS PREFERRED TO DISMISS THIS OCCURRENCE AS MERELY UNFORTUNATE.

5. AS FOR "MUTUAL" SUBSTANTIVE CONCESSIONS, WHICH HE SAID HAD BEEN MENTIONED TWICE DURING THE MEETING, HE ASKED RHETORICALLY

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 117124

WHAT "CONCESSIONS" TURKEY COULD BE EXPECTED TO MAKE IN THE AEGEAN? WASN'T IT REALLY GREECE THAT WOULD HAVE TO MAKE THE CONCESSIONS? WAS THE USG DEVELOPING A THESIS AS TO WHAT CONCESSIONS GREECE SHOULD MAKE TO TURKEY? HE AND CARAMANLIS WERE MORE THAN A LITTLE WORRIED ABOUT HIS PROSPECT. THEY SAW NO ROOM FOR THE U.S. OR ANY OTHER THIRD COUNTRY TO GET DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN AEGEAN PROBLEMS. THEY THOUGHT THAT OTHERS, INCLUDING THE U.S., COULD MORE HELPFULLY AND WISELY SUPPORT A PROCESS, OR A FRAMEWORK, FOR DEALING WITH AEGEAN PROBLEMS -- SUCH AS CARAMANLIS HAS REPEATEDLY PROPOSED -- AND NOT GET INTO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE MATTER. IF U.S. OFFICIALS WERE BEGINNING TO FORMULATE WHAT "CONCESSIONS" GREECE WOULD HAVE TO MAKE IN THE AEGEAN, BITSIOS WAS WORRIED SINCE THIS WENT TO MATTERS AFFECTING GREECE'S ULTIMATE SOVEREIGN RIGHTS AND SHOULD BE LEFT TO THE GREEK GOVERNMENT TO ASSESS AND CARRY TO THE GREEK PEOPLE. (COMMENT: BITSIOS WAS CALM AND OBJECTIVE IN MAKING THIS POINT, NOT SO MUCH AS A COMPLAINT ABOUT COMMENTS MADE IN LONDON, BUT MORE IN THE NATURE OF A KIND OF ADVANCE WARNING THAT THE USG SHOULD BE EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS AND PRUDENT IF IT WAS SEEKING TO PLAY A LARGER

ROLEIN DEALING WITH GREEK-TURKISH DIFFERENCES IN THE AEGEAN.)
I TOLD BITSIOS I WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE GOG'S VIEWS WERE WELL
UNDERSTOOD IN WASHINGTON AND FELT SURE WEWOULD CONTINUE TO CONSULT
VERY CLOSELY WITH ATHENS ON THIS AND OTHER PROBLEMS IN THE
AREA.

6. AS TO THEIR OTHER MEETINGS IN LONDON, BITSIOS SAID THAT THE
LONG MEETING CARAMANLIS HAD MAY 9 WITH CLARK CLIFFORD HAS BEEN
VERY GOOD AND HELPFUL. THEY HAD HAD A QUITE USEFUL DISCUSSION OF
THE CYPRUS PROBLEM, AMONG OTHER THINGS (ALTHOUGH I SENSED THERE
WAS SOME DIVERGENCE BETWEEN THE WAY CLIFFORD HAD ASSESSED AND
CHARACTERIZED THE VARIOUS PROPOSALS MADE AT THE INTER-
COMMUNAL TALKS IN VIENNA LAST MONTH AND THE WAY CARAMANLIS
AND BITSIOS EVALUATED THEM). HE SAID THAT JOHN TZOUNIS HAD
ALSO HAD SEVERAL GOOD TALKS WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN
AND NELSON LEDSKY.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 STATE 117124

7. BITSIOS DID NOT GO INTO DETAIL ON CARAMANLIS' MEETINGS
WITH OTHER EUROPEAN LEADERS EXCEPT TO INDICATE THAT HE HAD HAD
A FULL PROGRAM OF SUCH MEETINGS AND THAT THE MAIN TOPIC OF
CONVERSATION WAS GREECE'S ENTRY INTO THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC
COMMUNITY. SUBSEQUENTLY, CARAMANLIS TRAVELED TO PARIS AND HAD
A FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH GISCARD ON THE SAME SUBJECT AND APPARENTLY
RECEIVED REASSURANCES OF FRANCE'S CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR
GREECE'S EARLY ENTRY, AS DISTINCT FROM THE GOF'S POSITIONS WITH
RESPECT TO SPAIN AND PORTUGAL.

8. IN CLOSING THIS PART OF OUR CONVERSATION, BITSIOS
INDICATED HE HAD DISCUSSED WITH SECRETARY VANCE IN LONDON THE
IMPORTANCE OF AN EARLY AND SUBSTANTIAL BILATERAL DISCUSSION
BETWEEN THE TWO OF THEM OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS AFFECTING U.S.-
GREEK RELATIONS, INCLUDING CYPRUS AND GREEK-TURKISH DIFFERENCES.
BITSIOS SAID HE HAD INVITED THE SECRETARY TO MAKE A VISIT TO ATHENS,
ALTHOUGH THE SECRETARY WAS NONCOMMITTAL. BITSIOS SAID HE HAD
ALSO PROPOSED TO GO AND MEET WITH THE SECRETARY IN A THIRD
COUNTRY AT SOME POINT DURING THE COURSE OF THE SECRETARY'S
TRAVELS, AND THAT THE SECRETARY HAD INDICATED THE POSSIBILITY OF
SOMETHING BEING WORKED OUT, PERHAPS IN SOME WESTERN EUROPEAN
COUNTRY IN JULY. BITSIOS SAID IF I HEARD ANYTHING FURTHER ON
THIS TO LET HIM KNOW AND I SAID I WOULD DO SO.
KUBISCH UNQTE CHRISTOPHER

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